



SUPERINTENDENT UPDATES

August 18, 2022

Good afternoon/evening,

My name is Dr. Steve Matthews. I am the new Superintendent of the Rockford Public Schools.

I am excited to be here. I am also excited about the upcoming school year.

I would like to thank Dr. Michael Shabler for all that he did for the district and his stewardship of the district over the last 32 years.

I would also like to thank Korie Wilson-Crawford for her service in the interim role.

This email will serve as my introduction and give you some perspective on how I approach my job.

I will regularly - at least twice a month - email parents with district news. If there is breaking news, like a water main break or power outage, you may receive several emails and mine will probably be one of them. My goal is to ensure that you have information about the district, our schools, and our programs.

I know that you receive emails from the schools that your children attend. I want to communicate with you but don't want you to be overwhelmed with emails.

I will also host parent meetings regularly so that I can get to know you, hear from you, and share information about the district. Dates and topics for those meetings will be shared before September so that you can make plans to attend if you are interested.

If you have a question or concern, the first place to go would be the person closest to the situation. For example, if you have a concern about something that happens in a classroom, the best person to talk with would be the teacher. You could start with the principal but my guess is they will ask if you have spoken to the teacher. If you have a question about an athletic team or a club or extra-curricular activity, the best person to talk with would be the coach or the club/activity sponsor. If you come directly to me, I will probably say that I need to speak with the principal or director to get more information.

However, questions may arise about district practices or policies. You may contact me with those questions. I may have have one of the Assistant Superintendents, department directors, or principals respond back because they might have more information than I would about the issue. However, emailing me or contacting my office is certainly appropriate when you have a question or concern.

As we approach the start of the new school year, I would encourage you to talk with your children about the new school year. Talk about routines - when they will be getting up, when and where will they do homework, when will they go to bed, where will they catch the bus, what will happen at the end of the school day. Listen to them as they ask questions about the start of the school year. Children may have questions about riding the bus, getting their lunch, what to do if they can't open their locker, what to do if they lose something, and so on.

As a parent, I know from experience that I wanted my sons to be well-prepared. But, occasionally, I could overwhelm them with information. That was not very helpful.

Listening to my sons and responding to their questions proved to be a more effective strategy.

Creating a sense of anticipation and calm is important for our students as the new school year begins. Reinforce that there are many people in each school building that will help and will answer questions. There is a fine line between being excited and being anxious. We need to try and be excited, but not anxious, for the start of the school year.

I look forward to seeing you at our school buildings, in town, at events. Feel free to say hello.

Rockford is a wonderful district. We have many things of which to be proud. My job is to work with you and our staff to continue our tradition of excellence while also identifying ideas and areas that could help us continue to grow and improve.

I look forward to meeting and working with you.

Steve

Dr. Steve Matthews
Superintendent, Rockford Public Schools